As on	Total numbers of working connections (Landline and Wireless)
31.3.2002	4745207
31.3.2003	4981997
31.3.2004	4834486
31.3.2005	5153483
31.10.2005	5392204

It would be seen that number of phones are increasing except a small dip in 2003-04.

(d) MTNL is striving very hard to maintain the customers as well as increase the subscribers by taking various steps *viz.*, improving its network, providing innovating services at affordable prices to suit all segments of society, providing wireless connections of both Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) and Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) in line with the latest trend; improving customers relations and addressing to their needs, providing broadband services to its subscribers as per the global trend, etc.

Universal Service Obligation Fund

1673. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Universal Service Obligation Support Fund is not limited to Government companies like BSNL/MTNL;

(b) if so, whether private telephone operators are eligible for support from Universal Service Obligation Fund; and

(c) if so, the contribution of private telephone operators in the rural tele-density?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund is not limited to only Government Companies.

(b) The private telephone operators are eligible for support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

(c) M/s Reliance Infocomm Limited, Tata Tele Services Limited and Tata Tele Services, Maharashtra are successful bidders for providing Rural Individual Phone Connection (RDELs) on demand in 418 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs), Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited being successful bidder in remaining 1,267 SDCAs. The obligation for providing RDELs on demand in these SDCAs will commence from first quarter of the year 2006.

Expenditure on advertisements by BSNL

1674. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of expenditure incurred on advertisements by BSNL during the last three years;

(b) out of this, how much was spent in Tamil Nadu alone;

(c) the list of institutions/establishments/medias/press which advertisements were issued and the value of such advertisements in each case;

(d) whether it is a case of abuse of power and authority in favouring unduly a selective few organizations belonging to one single family or closely knitted family group; and

(e) will this undue favouritism continue or stop forthwith?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, year-wise total expenditure incurred on advertisement by BSNL and expenditure incurred in Tamil Nadu during the last three years are as follows:

Year	Total Expenditure	Expenditure in Tamil Nadu
2002-03	8498.47	678.59
2003-04	8286.01	615.46
2004-05	9504.63	525.11